



HIS BLESSING OF SHOWERS

Leader's Guide

Opening prayer: Heavenly Father, as we spend these moments pondering Your work in both drought and famine, instill in us a thankful countenance in the midst of both situations. We know that you can work good through all conditions in our temporal lives. Bless our time in Your Word. May we continue to grow as redeemed children through the life, death and resurrection of Your Dear Son Jesus Christ, set apart now to spread the good news of the Gospel everywhere to everyone. We ask this in the name of Jesus, Amen.

We begin by reading aloud together Ezekiel 34:26 (ESV): *And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.*

In this text God is again promising a blessing on a people who often forgot about Him. Those wayward Israelites in olden times were not unlike us today. During times of prosperity they became complacent and frequently began to worship idols and/or false prophets. After a time of testing they would once again repent and were again blessed by the One Triune God.

As I start to write this study, Dakotans are in the grips of a stubborn three-year drought. To farmers and ranchers this is very devastating. Hopes and dreams are shriveled and turn to powdery dust in the relentless heat and dry conditions. Many anxious eyes look upward daily to see if any relief in the form of a fluffy, billowing cloud might appear in the crystal clear, azure sky.

It seems fitting then to spend a few moments considering how our Lord God works through seasons of famine or drought. Read the following passages and answer the questions.

Famine or drought was used at times, especially in the Old Testament, as a tool to motivate God's people to repent and move in another direction.

What caused Abram to leave the promised country to live in Egypt? See **Genesis 12:10**. **A. A famine**
Genesis 12 ¹⁰ Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land.

In **Genesis 26:1-2**, what caused Isaac to leave his land? **A. A famine**
Genesis 26 ¹ Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ² And the Lord appeared to him and said, "Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you.

Can you think of a time in your life when adversity caused you to move in another direction? Share.
A. Varied responses

God also used famine or drought as a form of judgment upon a wayward people. Read **Haggai 1:7-11**. Why did God call for a famine on the Judeans who returned to Jerusalem? **A. They went after their own interests, building their own homes while God's temple lay in ruins.**

Haggai 1 ⁷ "Thus says the Lord of hosts: Consider your ways. ⁸ Go up to the hills and bring wood and build the house, that I may take pleasure in it and that I may be glorified, says the Lord. ⁹ You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the Lord of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house. ¹⁰ Therefore the heavens above you have withheld the dew, and the earth has withheld its produce.

¹¹ And I have called for a drought on the land and the hills, on the grain, the new wine, the oil, on what the ground brings forth, on man and beast, and on all their labors.”

Do you think that God can still use droughts or famine in our time to move people to repentance?

A. Varied responses

Look at **Genesis 26:2-5**. When we are in a season of famine, what do these words of comfort to Isaac tell us about God?

A. As He was with Isaac and his family, He will be with us and bless us.

Genesis 26 ¹ Now there was a famine in the land, besides the former famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Gerar to Abimelech king of the Philistines. ² And the Lord appeared to him and said, “Do not go down to Egypt; dwell in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Sojourn in this land, and I will be with you and will bless you, for to you and to your offspring I will give all these lands, and I will establish the oath that I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ I will multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and will give to your offspring all these lands. And in your offspring all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, ⁵ because Abraham obeyed my voice and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws.”

What words of comfort does Apostle Paul write in **Romans 8:35-39**?

A. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Romans 8 ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?³⁶ As it is written, “For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.” ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

There is great comfort in knowing that through all adversity, even when disciplined for being wayward, our God is with us and nothing will ever separate us from His love. How does this fact help us as Sisters in Christ to relate to others dealing with adversity? **A. Varied responses**

As I continued working through this study, our Lord saw fit to bless with life-giving showers. Once again the small ponds teemed with life, the grasses grew lush and green, and all things seemed to flourish. There was a time, though, when God used water in another way. Read **Genesis 7:4**. What was God’s form of judgment on a sin-filled world? **A. The Great Flood**

Genesis 7 ⁴ For in seven days I will send rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and every living thing that I have made I will blot out from the face of the ground.”

Noah and his family were saved from the waters of judgment that would bring certain death on the entire created world. Take a moment to discuss the differences and similarities of judgment and chastisement. **A. Varied responses, but judgment generally is a sentence of destruction or death on evil. Chastisement is a form of discipline used of God to bring a people back to repentance.**

As Noah was saved through the waters, we are saved through the waters. Look up **Colossians 2:12** and **1 Peter 3:18-21**. Which waters save us? **A. Waters of our Baptism**

Colossians 2 ¹² having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead.

1 Peter 3 ¹⁸For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit, ¹⁹in which he went and proclaimed to the spirits in prison, ²⁰because they formerly did not obey, when God's patience waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through water. ²¹Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

In **Isaiah 55:10-11**, God draws a comparison between what rain and snow produce and His Word. What is the analogy? **A. As precipitation waters the earth, so His Word goes out and accomplishes what He purposes.**

Isaiah 55 ¹⁰“For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, ¹¹so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

Christ often spoke of life-giving water. In **John 4: 13-14**, what does Jesus offer this woman of Samaria? **A. Living water only He can give.**

John 4 ¹³Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

Christ uses the metaphor of a bubbling spring to bring across the fact that, through the work of the Holy Spirit, this life-giving water wells up within us — not just to give us temporal relief from thirst, but to become an everlasting spring, welling up in us eternal life and an ever-lasting quenching of thirst. Through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are assured that we receive this life-giving water in our Baptism. We then tell others of this blessed eternal gift so they, too, can receive its blessings.

We close our study by reading together the words of Apostle Paul in Titus 3:5-7 (ESV): *He saved us, not because of work done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.*

Closing Prayer/Hymn: With one accord, O God, we pray: Grant us Your Holy Spirit. Help us in our infirmity Through Jesus’ blood and merit. Grant us to grow in grace each day That by this sacrament we may Eternal life inherit. [Amen.]*

*All Who Believe and Are Baptized,” LSB #601, verse 2 (Melody: “Dear Christians, One and All, Rejoice”).